

PETER'S WINDOW.

SUMMER, when it seems always golden afternoon, is the proper time for open windows; then, if ever, we have leisure to watch the world at large as well as hurry through it intent upon our business. Somebody once said that "change of occupation," not idleness, constituted a real rest. I wonder what our "ideal" holiday consists of? There have been articles lately to be read dealing with "Educative Holidays." To a jaded mind and body this, at first hearing, savours of severe self-discipline. But after all, which holiday lasts the longest—the one in which the days fritter out over tennis and novels or those which give us something to feed upon and remember for the rest of our lives? Jane Austin in one of her books describes the change wrought upon some very dull people by a visit to Bath. It was not that they enjoyed any outrageous gaieties there, but ever after they were able to "talk about Bath." We cannot all, of course, afford to go touring round the country or jaunting off abroad, but we might resolve, one and all, to see everything of interest in our own neighbourhood. It is a real sin, for instance, to live within reach of a cathedral and make no effort to reach it.

Another point in which holidays are very self-educative lies in the unwritten social laws which have spring up in our absence, and to which we have very quickly to adapt ourselves. "Thou shall not wear a sailor hat" has a deeper root than mere fashion. The whole way in which we are required to dress ourselves—large hats, trailing skirts, fragile blouses, and dangling chains—point to a return to "femininity." Women have spent twenty years proving that they can be learned and athletic, and suddenly have realized that they are expected to be ornamental too, and that they have been neglecting the social and æsthetic side of their characters. It is sad, but true, that a great many of the present generation have yet to prove that they can be "charming." In old days no woman presumed (unless she were a blue-stocking or a "grande-dame") to have interests of her own other than

strictly of the household. Nowadays so many girls are absorbed in some one hobby, fad, or idea, that they have no time or sympathy or attention for others. Far better to ride a hobby to death than to be absolutely empty-headed, but there is a happy medium. Let us hope that the girls yet in the school-room will be more interesting and more "interested" than their elder sisters—not less learned, nor less athletic, but more sympathetic.

Two books have lately come into Peter's ken which might please other rush-bearers. The *Letters of Matthew Arnold* have not only a pleasing patter of dear familiar names, but they largely tend to explain the man and his poems. One understands the wailing pessimism of *Dover Beach* so much better for knowing more of the man's trials at the time when it was penned. School-inspecting, on which he has many interesting things to say giving us insight into National Education then and now, was not to him an inspiring task. He had not the wide optimism to see in each stolid dirty child the possible immensities of human nature. His educational theories are rather of the Lockian type, he dreams of what "is suitable for a gentleman" and, with unconscious early Victorian snobbery, launches tentative little sneers at the "masses."

The other book combines Natural History and Philosophy and Social Ethics—Maeterlinck's *Life of the Bee*—deserving of far more booming than melodramatic novels of inflated editions.